



Lincoln Eliot School – Design Review Committee Meeting

Design Review Committee Meeting with Lincoln-Eliot School Building Committee in Attendance

Meeting: February 16th, 2022 (6:04 PM-7:40 PM)

Location: Digital, via Zoom

Attendees

City of Newton:	Alejandro Valcarce	Joshua Morse	Stephanie Gilman
School Building Committee:	Joshua Morse*	Stephanie Gilman	
Design Review Committee:	Peter Barrer* David Gillespie* Jonathan Kantar* Steve Siegel*	Ellen Light* Thomas Gloria* SingNing Kuo* John Mulligan*	Liam Hurley* Robert Hnasko* Carol Schein* Maria Leo*
Arrowstreet Architects:	Larry Spang Daniel Jick	Tina Soo Hoo	Claës Andreasen
Terraink:	Jade Cummins		
Hill International:	Peter Martini		
Others:	Andreae Downs Marc Kaufman	John Oliver	William Ferguson

* Denotes Voting Members

Alejandro Valcarce called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that a combination of Option 1v3 and Option 2.B was voted in on 1/11/22 as the preferred option.

Site and Landscape Design Updates were presented and reviewed.

- Van & Bus Loop.
- Walnut Park Rear Entrance design developments.
- Walnut Park side grade changes to let more light into lower classrooms.
 - Potential programming opportunities on Walnut Park side of the building.
- Field, Hardscape, and Playground.
 - Lower Playground for K-2nd Grades.
 - Upper Playground for 3rd-5th Grades.
 - Play on Slopes in the Playground. (examples depicted)
 - Four Square and Multi-use half sized Basketball Court.
 - A meeting with PE staff is needed to understand programming needs for the Basketball Court.
 - Full-size takes up a lot of space – outline depicted.

SingNing Kuo noted that elevation markings at each entrance, both playgrounds, and the basketball court would be helpful for interpreting the plans.

Accessibility Routes were depicted, reviewed and discussed.

Thomas Gloria asked how accessible routes are used to navigate to and between the playgrounds. Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that students going to recess from the cafeteria would utilize the sloped path along the west side of the building to access the playground and basketball area. Thomas gloria inquired about accessible egress routes from the Cafeteria. Ms. Soo Hoo stated that students would exit the cafeteria and utilize the curved ramp to access the upper terrace, noting that stairs and pathways are still being explored.

Carol Schein expressed concerns with the basketball court and suggested flipping the basketball court to locate the hoop where the foursquare is rotated. Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that the position of the basketball court has not been finalized and modifying the position of the basketball court is still being explored. It was suggested to explore placing the basketball hoop against the Gymnasium wall to act as a backstop. Alejandro Valcarce suggested relocating the Foursquare with the rest of the playground equipment. Carol Schein noted that fencing would visually block the entrance to the school.

Jonathan Kantar asked if the upper playground, walkway along the building, and the Auditorium Lobby entrance is at the same elevation. Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that the south end of the walkway is at the same elevation as the pre-existing path, with a gentle sloping path down to the main entrance area. The upper playground is slightly lower, with the lower playground being lower than the upper playground.

Jonathan Kantar inquired about the distances from Jackson Rd. to the entrances and how they compare to other Elementary Schools. Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted the distances are very similar to the Zervas School. Joshua Morse noted that the distances are average compared to other schools, though is less than what is seen at newer schools.

Jonathan Kantar asked about the various ways to access the building from Jackson Rd. Entrance pathing routes were reviewed. Jonathan Kantar noted that making sure the Auditorium has direct and easy access for the general public is preferred.

Peter Barrer suggested adding stairs to avoid having to walk along the long arcing ramp from Jackson Rd.

Joshua Morse stated that there are two stairwells flanking the Auditorium/Cafeteria block that can be used by the general public for access. Ellen Light noted that the long arcing ramp can be frustrating to walk up and suggested adding lighting around the stairwells flanking the Auditorium/Cafeteria to highlight the entry. Joshua Morse suggested that people with disabilities will most likely use the more direct entrance off of Walnut Park.

David Gillespie suggested moving the basketball court to the other side of the gymnasium and leaving the foursquare courts along the front of the building. Mr. Gillespie also proposed to limit the elevations in the Playground area to two different elevations: Cafeteria, Auditorium and upper playground on one elevation. Lower playground, main entrance, and basketball/foursquare on one elevation.

Stephanie Gilman asked if the gymnasium and cafeteria elevations are roughly the same.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that the New Gymnasium and the Existing Cafeteria level are on the same elevation, and the Auditorium Lobby, and Classroom bar are roughly 4ft higher.

Ellen Light shared concerns over maintenance of all the stairs and stadium stairs and questioned if the stadium seating and outdoor classroom took realistic student counts into consideration.

Carol Schein suggested moving the basketball court down to the soccer field area.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that the U-10 size soccer field which is depicted on the site plan is not a requirement and is being utilized as a placeholder. Ms. Soo Hoo noted that a smaller soccer field size can be incorporated to maximize utilization of the space.

Peter Martini asked what the “four-lines” on the hill between the soccer field and playground depicted.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that it is a sloped hill in order to create flat areas for the soccer field and playground.

Someone asked what the depicted semi-circles at the ends of the field indicate.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that it is a seating area or outdoor gathering space for students.

SingNing Kuo inquired about the difference in elevations of the pre-existing and new entrances. Listed Below:

- Waban St./Walnut Park Entry: 51.4ft – same elevation as the first floor of the classroom bar
- Auditorium Side – Lower Lobby Entry: 51.4ft – same elevation as Waban St./Walnut Park entrance
- Jackson Road Entry: 47.4 – same elevation as the cafeteria

SingNing Kuo also shared concerns over the length of the arcing ramp on the Cafeteria/Auditorium side of the site, noting that it is a lot of retaining walls and long pathing. Ms. Kuo also shared support for moving the Basketball court to the other side of the gymnasium, noting that a 10ft tall fence on top of a retaining wall would create a large visual barrier to the front entrance.

Pam Wright noted that moving the Basketball court to the other side of the gym will make it more difficult to monitor students. Ms. Wright also questioned as to why the design moved away from angling the Gymnasium, as it could open up more plaza space at the entry.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that the current design helps preserve set back from the street as a buffer. Ms. Soo Hoo added that rotating the gym allowed minimizing the footprint of the building.

Joshua Morse suggested studying an option which shifts the soccer field over and places the basketball court into the soccer field area.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that there is some grading considerations on the parking lot side of the field area, and suggested the Auditorium side of the field as a better location for the Basketball court. Further study is needed.

Alejandro Valcarce suggested exploring shifting the Gymnasium closer to Waban St. noting that the Gymnasium is lower in elevation than Waban St. and will open more space in the entry plaza area.

David Gillespie suggested moving the Basketball court closer to the Cafeteria/Auditorium and shifting the play structures closer to the Main entry to prevent having fencing block the main entry.

Joshua Morse wondered if it is possible to locate both playgrounds on the same basic elevations, utilizing the basketball court as the major transition.

Arrowstreet to study further.

Building

The working floor plan was reviewed. Special education and support spaces will be available as part of the classroom wing. It was noted that the layout of classrooms and support spaces is still being explored.

First Floor – New Lobby, New Admin Area, New Gymnasium, Kindergarten, 1st Grade Classrooms, Art, Music, and Cafeteria.

- New Additions
 - Entry vestibule and learning commons lobby area.
 - Admin offices
 - Gymnasium
- Classrooms and support spaces for Teaching Staff.
 - Specialist areas and support spaces are to be explored further with the Teaching Staff.
- Music and Art areas are to be designated out of pre-existing Cafeteria area.
 - Pre-existing Cafeteria is more than double what is needed to support the school's needs.

Second Floor – Double-height Lobby, Media Center, 2nd and 3rd Grade Classrooms.

- New additions
 - Open, double-height lobby space.
 - Media Center.
 - Librarian provided details on usage and programming.
 - Technology office, Library office and supporting needs spaces.
- Classrooms and support spaces.
- 2nd floor auditorium lobby entrance.

Third Floor – 4th and 5th Grade Classrooms.

- Similar layout to 1st and 2nd floors.
- Existing Auditorium Projection and Mechanical room.

Basement – Custodial areas, storage, and receiving (Only under Cafeteria)

- Loading and Receiving area.
- Recycling and Trash.
- District-wide storage and maintenance workshop
- Electrical and Mechanical Rooms

Jonathan Kantar inquired about a service elevator being incorporated in the basement design.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted the existence of a sizeable pre-existing dumbwaiter that may need to be replaced.

Jonathan Kantar shared concerns over moving things up and down between floors as well as the long travel distances required for custodial staff to service the school.

Stephanie Gilman noted that a meeting with Public Facilities is needed to resolve any potential issues.

Jonathan Kantar also questioned whether the kitchen could support catered events.

Stephanie Gilman noted there is a meeting with Food Services to discuss equipment and usage, noting that the primary use of the cafeteria is for the school. Further comment is needed from the City of Newton for a decision on whether the Kitchen will be available for public events.

Alejandro Valcarce stated that the primary function of the Auditorium is for the school, noting additional work will need to be done to explore community use of the space. Mr. Valcarce also noted that additional custodial and support spaces will need to be explored.

Larry Spang of Arrowstreet noted that the kitchen and servery setup will be able to support both operations methods; Heat-and-serve food prepped in a central kitchen, and Cook-and-serve food cooked in the kitchen on-site. Mr. Spang also expressed that a service elevator in the basement is a cost not incorporated into the budget.

Ellen Light suggested that more studies need to be conducted on the landscaping outside, on the terrace, to explore solutions to eliminate excessive ramping

Larry Spang of Arrowstreet noted that there is still a lot of work to do.

Claës Andreasen of Arrowstreet reviewed and performed a walkthrough of a working 3d model of the Building.

Exterior

Claës Andreasen noted that routes and entries into the school should be made very clear in the design of the building. Overhangs were depicted on the entries for natural weather protection, along with windows for open and clear visibility from the Admin Office outside to see approaching people. Mr. Andreasen suggested locating a mural on the planar walls of the school with an example being shown on the Auditorium wall. Importance was stressed on exploring options to visually open the entrance to Jackson Rd.

Interior

The learning common was reviewed depicting stadium seating, that could be used as a gathering area, flanked by stairs and a ramp to bring students up to the classroom hallway level. Claës Andreasen noted the addition of stairs up to the 2nd floor for more direct Media Center access. After meeting with the Librarian, it was determined that a better direction would be to enclose the library with glass to minimize sound and distractions while still letting in plenty of light. The Gymnasium was also briefly shown.

Ellen Light noted the Walnut Park/Waban St. entry faces North-east, and considerations will need to be made to ensure protection from weather. Ms. Light also expressed safety concerns over locating the learning commons area close to the entrance.

Jonathan Kantar inquired about how someone would locate the main entrance and if signage would be used.

Claës Andreasen noted that the design of the paths and where they meet the street and public areas is crucial to determining how to approach the school, however, a sign may be used.

David Gillespie shared concerns over the landscaping design detracting from the visual connection from Jackson Rd. to the front entry.

Jonathan Kantar added that the basketball court screening becomes a hinderance to visually locating the front door.

Claës Andreasen noted that options are being explored to determine the proper solution.

Arrowstreet concluded the meeting with a short presentation on sustainability. (PDF posted)

Due to time constraints no comments or questions were entertained.

Alejandro Valcarce noted that the Site plan needs approval by late Spring/early Summer.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:40PM

Details of this meeting can be found on the project website at <http://lincolneliot-necp-projects.com/>.

Next DRC meeting is scheduled March, 16th 2022 at 6pm via Zoom with link to follow.

These notes will become part of the project record as written

To the best of my knowledge, these notes are a fair representation of the items discussed at the meeting.
Additional items or corrections should be brought to the attention of the writer.
Submitted by: Mark Krikorian